

*Eldridge  
Christmas Material*

**It Happened At  
Christmas**

*By*  
**Freda Graham Bundy**



PRICE 25c

THE  
HOUSE  
THAT  
HELPS

**Eldridge Entertainment House**

FRANKLIN - OHIO

DENVER - COLORADO



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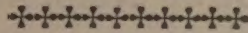
Franklin, Ohio, also 922 S. Ogden St., Denver, Colorado



# It Happened At Christmas

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**Freda Graham Bundy**



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*Published by*

**Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc.**

**FRANKLIN, OHIO**

*A Play in Four Acts, Suitable for Schools, Churches  
or Clubs in Rural Communities*

CHARACTERS

GRANDMA SPENCER

GRANDPA SPENCER

NELL—Their Daughter

JENNIE—Another Daughter

TOM—A Son

BOB—Nell's Husband

CHILDREN OF NELL AND BOB

EVELYN, 17

ELEANOR, 15

JOHN, 19

TEDDY, 10

BETTY, 12

JIM—The Grocer's Boy

MRS. SMITH—A Neighbor

MISS BATES—The School-teacher

Time of Playing—One-half Hour



## COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES

GRANDMA and GRANDPA SPENCER—Grey-haired and wearing spectacles; old-fashioned clothing.

NELL and JENNIE—Up-to-date matrons of the present day.

TOM and BOB—Successful business men in everyday clothes.

EVELYN and ELEANOR—High school girls in bright dresses, "flapper" type.

JOHN—Young "shiek," sleek hair, jazz sweater and light trousers.

TEDDY and BETTY—Ordinary school clothes.

JIM—White apron or coat and cap.

MRS. SMITH—The most amusing and peculiar clothes possible, a comedy type.

MISS BATES—Attractive, conservative, out-door clothes.

The properties are easily obtainable—old-fashioned furniture for Grandma Spencer's home, and plain, comfortable furnishings for Bob and Nell's home.



# It Happened At Christmas

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## ACT I

*Scene — Old-fashioned living-room, containing, among other things, a table, rocking chair and a few straight chairs. Grandma Spencer in rocking chair, knitting and Grandpa busy with hammer and saw at the table.*

GRANDPA: Well, Mother, what is that you are making?

GRANDMA: Oh, dear! It is a scarf that Nell was knitting for Eleanor and she says that she is too busy to finish it, so she wanted to know if I would do it. I wouldn't mind, but Jennie gave me some mittens to finish for the baby and I don't know how I shall finish everything.

GRANDPA: Law sakes! Mother it wasn't so in our day, all this fuss and worry. A pair of mittens and some candy and the children were satisfied. Now it's airships and automobiles.

*[Enter Jennie in coat and hat.]*

JENNIE: Oh, Mother! I just ran in to see if you would have time to help me with my puddings. I'm rushed off my feet with the church bazaar and everything. Sometimes I think that Christmas will drive me crazy.



GRANDMA: I guess maybe I'd have time tomorrow morning to make them, but Jennie, they should have been made weeks ago. You leave everything until the last minute at Christmas and then try to do too much.

*[Enter Mrs. Smith, the neighbor, in ridiculous hat and coat, with market basket on arm.]*

MRS. SMITH *[in high-pitched voice]*: Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer and Jennie. I just dropped in to see if you had a pattern for a fancy masquerade costume. I know that you make them all for Evelyn and Eleanor. I am nearly 'dismasted! My Pansy Emmeline wants one to wear to a fancy dress party the night after Christmas and I have to drop everything to make it. You don't happen to have one for a harem lady or a Egyptian princess, do you?

GRANDMA: I'm so sorry, Mrs. Smith, but Mrs. Young came in yesterday and borrowed every fancy dress pattern that I had. You run over to her place and maybe you can find something.

MRS. SMITH: Oh, dearie me! More running about for me! I am just that busy. Thank goodness, Christmas doesn't come every month. Are you coming my way, Jennie?

JENNIE: Yes, goodbye, Mother and Dad. I'll be over early in the morning.

*[Exit Jennie and Mrs. Smith.]*

*[Enter Tom, with a large bundle under his arm.]*

TOM: Hello, Dad and Mother. Busy as usual! Say, Dad, you haven't much to do just now, have you? *[Unwraps parcel.]* Here is a cradle that I started for Peggy and I know that I will never have time to



finish it. We have more work than we know what to do with, parties, concerts, bridge-club dance and goodness knows what! You won't mind finishing it, will you? It only needs the rockers on and the slats and the ends—oh, yes, it will have to be enameled.

GRANDPA: I'll see what I can do, Tom. Bob brought me over a sleigh to finish for him. I guess I'll be able to finish both of them.

TOM: All right, Dad, thanks ever so much. I was pretty sure that you would do it. Goodbye for now—got to run home and take Mary down shopping.

*[Exit Tom.]*

GRANDPA: Dear me! Sometimes, seems as if I wish there weren't any more Christmases.

GRANDMA: Yes, John, I sometimes wish that, too, but I wouldn't tell the children. Maybe it's because we are getting old.

*[Knock at door and Jim, grocer's boy, enters with box of groceries.]*

GRANDMA: Good morning, Jim, put the things on the table. How are you this morning?

JIM: I'm just good and mad. I wish there were no such thing as Christmas. Some of these women make me sick! Call up the boss and order currants and when I get them there, they swear it was raisins that they ordered.

Took the groceries over to Mrs. Simpson's this morning and she told me I made her cake fall when I opened the door. After this, I'll set her things down by the gate and the dogs can eat the meat and the eggs freeze for all I care.

GRANDMA: My! My! Jim, but you are in an



awful mood this morning. Are you sure that it is all Christmas that is causing it?

JIM: Oh, well, I guess maybe I'm tired this morning. I was out to a party last night, got to sleep about four, got up at six.

*[Jim picks up empty box and departs.]*

(CURTAIN)



## SCENE 2

[*Scene—Kitchen of Nell Spencer's home. Tables, chairs and old couch as furniture. Nell, pleasant-faced woman of forty in gingham dress and apron, stands at table, cooking, looks at alarm clock on small table and exclaims:*]

NELL: Good gracious! Here it is eleven o'clock and I haven't got this ready for the oven yet. I wonder why people have to have Christmas cake. It takes hours to make and is gobbled up in no time.

[*Enter Evelyn, carrying hat and coat.*]

EVELYN: Say, Mother, can't we have a new rug for the living-room? I hate to think of having the Christmas party and that old rug on the floor. I thought that perhaps Dad would buy a new Chesterfield suite too, nearly all the girls have them in their homes. Oh, I was just thinking how nice it would be to have flowers for each of the guests. It would only cost four or five dollars, could we, Mother?

NELL: Mercy, child, don't you realize that it takes all your father makes to keep you five children in shoes, dresses, coats, to say nothing of music lessons and a hundred other things.

ELEANOR: Yes, I know, but Christmas is a special occasion. Anyway, we can have that Stokes girl in to do the serving and have our coffee in the living-room afterward, can't we, Mother?

NELL: Well, maybe, but I don't know what your father will say to such foolishness.

[*Exit Eleanor, enter John, whistling.*]



JOHN: Say, Mother, I want you to coax Dad to let me have ten dollars for a very special present. You see I spent all my month's salary on presents for the family and gee! Mother, I just have to get this present, it's extra special.

NELL: Well, John, if you really want ten dollars that badly, you can go down and help Mr. Jones every evening for the next two weeks. He wants a young man to work for him.

JOHN: Oh, suffering cats! Mother, I haven't any free evenings. Monday night is our bridge club; Tuesday, the rink; Wednesday night I have a date; Thursday, gym night; Friday night, picture show; Saturday night, date; Sunday night, date. So that's that!

NELL: You heard what I said, John. Your father is not made of money.

*[Exit John, hands in pocket, dejected attitude.]*

*[Enter Teddy and Betty.]*

TEDDY: Gee whiz! I'm sick of practisin' fer the Christmas concert. Don't see why we can't have it 'thout practisin'. I know my old piece, could say it standin' on my head.

NELL: Very well, Teddy, let me hear you say it right now.

*[Teddy scowls, advances to center, makes exaggerated bow and begins in falsetto voice.]*

TEDDY: Behold! Behold! A shining light!  
what—

What wonders here—what wonders what

*[Gazes about, twists coat and resumes]*



The gloomy night is pale and fade!

NELL: Pale and fade! That doesn't sound right, Teddy.

BETTY: Teddy, you said you could say it standing on your head. You'd better try it that way, you might know it better.

TEDDY: Aw, shoot! I don't want to be in the old concert, anyway.

BETTY: Yes, you do so, Teddy. You were awful sore when you thought the teacher wasn't going to give you a part.

TEDDY: Oh, keep still, smarty!

BETTY: Say, Mum, do you think I'll get a new wrist watch this Christmas? I think I'd like a pearl necklace, too, and I have been wanting a moving-picture camera for an awful long time.

NELL: My, you children will drive me distracted. Let me see, where did I put the citron!

*[Exit Nell. Teddy and Betty, slyly dip fingers into the batter, help themselves to a few raisins and run from the room. Bob, Nell's husband, enters, loaded high with parcels, groans and drops parcels on the couch.]*

BOB *[mopping brow]*: Holy Smoke! Such a time! I suppose I have forgotten half the things. I bought four silk mufflers and now I believe it was only one muffler and three books. That yarn I was to match, I lost the sample, so I told the clerk to give me a ball of any color. By Jove! where did I put that pin that I bought for Eleanor! *[Searches madly through pockets and empties out a dozen small packages, finally locates it.]* And still I don't know what to buy for Nell.



[*Enter Evelyn, carrying large parcel.*]

EVELYN: Hello, Dad! You are just the one that I want to see. There is an express man at the door. He just brought this parcel for me and he is waiting for the money.

BOB: Well, how much express is there on it, forty or fifty cents?

EVELYN [*in timid voice*]: No-o, not exactly. You see it is a C.O.D. parcel, there's fifteen dollars to pay on it.

BOB [*shouting*]: Fifteen dollars! Good-night! What do you youngsters think I am, a branch of the Royal Bank! How did you intend to pay for it and what is it anyway? Speak up, I demand an answer.

EVELYN [*tearfully*]: I'll have to tell you and spoil everything—the presents for you and Mother—that gun case that you wanted so much.

BOB [*contritely*]: Shucks! Evie, why didn't you tell your old dad that it was none of his business. Here's the money, now run off and pay him.

[*Exit Evelyn.*]

BOB: Well, this Christmas business sure makes a hole in a fellow's pocket. Oh, Nell! Nell!

[*Enter Nell, wiping hands on apron.*]

BOB: Here are the things that you wanted me to get and there will likely be some that you didn't want. How many mufflers did you say to get?

NELL: Mufflers! I said neckties!

BOB: Well for the love of Pete! I remember now, you did say neckties. You wanted candles, didn't you? Well, there are two dozen.

NELL: Two dozen! But I only wanted TWO! Two long ones for the candlesticks on the table.



BOB [*holding his head*]: Well, I'll be blessed! Why in the world can't the girls do this shopping! I'm fed up on it. I suppose everything in those parcels is the wrong thing. I know the wool is.

(CURTAIN)



## SCENE 3.

*Scene—Home of Grandma and Grandpa Spencer. It is Christmas night, the old couple are seated in rockers, dressed in their best, Grandpa in his sock feet.*

GRANDPA: Well, it has been a happy day. It was well worth all the work. Every one had such a happy time.

GRANDMA: Yes, indeed, and my, the children were so good to us! I am glad, Father, that we could do that little to help them finish up their gifts.

[A knock and Miss Bates, the teacher, enters.]

GRANDMA: Why, good evening, Miss Bates—Merry Christmas!

MISS BATES: Thank you. I just ran in a moment to wish you folks a Merry Christmas. Hasn't it been a lovely Christmas. You know this time last week, I was so worried over that concert that I felt like throwing up the whole thing. The children wouldn't practice and everything seemed to go wrong. But, oh, the concert went off well, the children all did splendidly, and I feel so happy now.

GRANDPA: Yes, the Christmas Spirit makes a person feel pretty good, after all.

GRANDMA: Oh, my, yes. I wouldn't do without Christmas for anything.

MISS BATES: Well, folks, I must run now. I am invited to a party this evening.



*[Exit Miss Bates. Evelyn, Eleanor and John rush in.]*

EVELYN: Come on, Grandma and Grandpa, you must come over to our house to the party.

GRANDPA: No, no—not at this time of night.

JOHN: Be a sport, Grandpa. We want you to do the Red River jig. Hold up your feet, and I'll put your boots on for you.

*[Young folks bustle about and wrap up the old people. Sleigh bells heard outside.]*

(CURTAIN)

## SCENE 4.

*Scene—Living room of Bob and Nell's home. A party in progress, guests seated about, Tom, Jennie, Mrs. Smith, Miss Bates and other characters. When curtain goes up, piano is playing and three playing final part of musical chairs. Enter young girl, wearing maid's cap and apron, bearing cake and cookies.*

BOB [*at sight of maid*]: Why, hello, Susie Stokes. What's the idea of the regalia. Sit down here with the rest of us and let my girls do the serving.

ELEANOR [*in shocked voice*]: Father! She's our maid.

BOB [*gazing about*]: Well, I'll be blessed! Bob Spencer with a maid in the house.

ELEANOR: FATHER!

TOM: Come on, folks, let's have some fun. How about a little community singing? Miss Bates, won't you play for us?

[*Miss Bates seats herself at the piano and the party sings two Christmas carols. Enter figure, clothed in white, face covered with a veil. Stands at one side of room, wand in hand.*]

SPIRIT: I am the Spirit of Future Christmases. I have heard several in this room remark that they wished there were no more Christmases. [*Points*



to *Teddy*.] You are sick of Christmas trees and concerts.

TEDDY: No, I'm not! I got a dandy book off of the tree and I was glad that night I was in the concert. I like Christmas.

[*Spirit points to Nell.*]

SPIRIT: You said that the children nearly drove you crazy and you were worked to death at Christmas. Do you want any more Christmases?

NELL: Indeed, yes, I soon get rested up and I do enjoy seeing the children have a good time.

SPIRIT [*pointing to Bob*]: You were moaning over the money that it was costing you and the fuss and worry about the house.

BOB: Sure I was, but I didn't mean it. Christmas is a pretty good time after all. When I am gone I want my children to look back with fond recollections of their dad, so what is a little extra money spent to make them happy. Me for Christmas!

SPIRIT: Is there any one present who does not want any more Christmases?

ALL [*in unison*]: NO!

TEDDY [*slipping up behind the Spirit and pulling off the veil*]: Oh, gee! It's only Evelyn. I thought it was a real Spirit, anyhow we're all for Christmas.

(CURTAIN)

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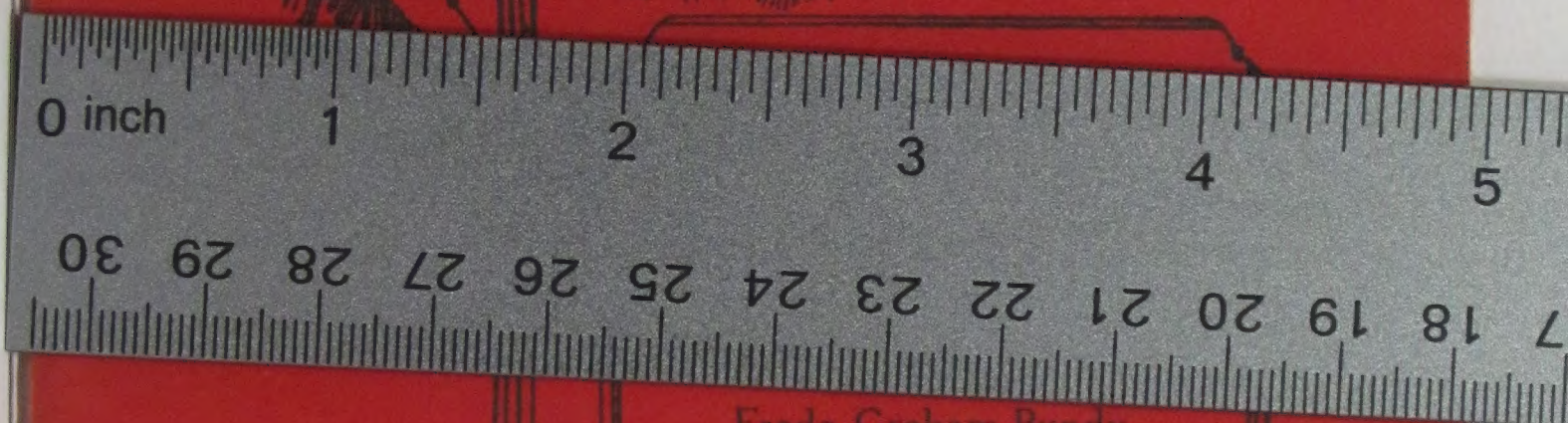












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